The Socialist Movement

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THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

The Socialist movement is the natural outcome of modern industrial conditions. Like most great movements, it has passed through a Utopian phase. This period began early in the eighteenth century and was characterized by the Utopian schemes of Owen, St. Simon and Fourier. These men were Socialists in that their starting point was proletarian criticism of the existing social system, and their object the overthrow of the capitalist economy and the substitution therefor of collective ownership. They were Utopians because they did not grasp the real factors of Socialism. They assumed that all that was needed to bring in the new order was enlightenment. They appealed to men as a whole, expecting that, when the matter was rightly understood, all would wish for the change, and those enjoying special privileges would divest themselves of their possessions and usher in the new order!

The Utopians ignored the class struggle and consequently failed to recognize the fact that a part of society, the ruling class, was satisfied with the existing order and desired its retention. As the Utopians repudiated the class struggle, so they repudiated all political effort. They seemed to think that the preaching of the new gospel was all that was necessary—proclaim aloud the blessings of the new order and it may come, lo! in the twinkling of an eye!

These men were truly children of their age. They did well, grandly well, considering the light they possessed, but they were not in possession of sufficient economic data to enable them to perceive the genesis of capitalist exploitation, or comprehend the law of economic evolution. They perceived the evils of our industrial order and depicted the
same with clearness and satire, but it was left to the genius of Karl Marx to point out the genesis of surplus value and the law of economic determinism, and thus reduce Socialism from Utopia to science.

The discoveries of Marx placed Socialism upon a solid foundation. It is now no longer a scheme or device of anyone, but a scientific philosophy, and rests upon an historic, economic and scientific basis.

We need, however, to distinguish between Socialism as a future state of Society and the Socialist movement, which is an effort to realize that state. The Socialist movement must, of necessity, be carried on within the confines of the present social order, and so possesses several well-marked characteristics.

1. It is a Proletarian Movement.

The class upon which the movement rests is the proletariat—the class of wage and salary workers. The very conditions for the existence of modern Socialism was the rise of the proletariat class. It is not my purpose here to trace the origin of this class; suffice it to say that every system has given rise to social classes and the capitalist has produced the proletariat. The history of the origin and development of the proletariat is the history of capitalism itself.

The capitalist system necessarily presupposes the rending of society into two classes—the owners of the means of production and those who have nothing but their labor-power to sell. The laboring class is thus absolutely dependent upon the capitalist class. The ideal of every proletarian movement must, necessarily, be the emancipation of the workers from this condition of dependence and servitude. Before the proletariat can make much progress toward this end it must know itself in its historic relations.
A clear conception of these relations reveals the programme and tactics necessary to success.

For the working class to secure its freedom it must cease to be dependent upon the capitalist class, and this can only be accomplished by overthrowing the capitalist order. The abolition of modern capitalism can be accomplished in one of two ways: either by reversing the wheels of progress, destroying modern methods and returning to the days of handicraft and individual production, or by retaining modern methods and pushing on the organization of industry to its logical consummation, collective ownership—Socialism. The latter method is the only one to which the proletariat can attach itself, inasmuch as the proletariat class is the result of the development of the capitalist system, being necessarily associated with production on a large scale. Thus the emancipation of the proletariat must be accomplished by going forward, not backward. Collective ownership of the means of production and distribution is the only solution to the problem.

Socialism, then, naturally arises out of the economic situation of the proletariat. The proletarian movement must, of necessity, have a Socialist ideal, and Socialism must, of necessity, rest upon and receive its initiative from the proletariat class.

Socialism, then, represents the interests of the proletariat class. A movement represents the interests of a class when it makes for the perpetuity of that class. We thus see how impossible it is for the Socialist movement to represent the interests of the capitalist class. To subserve the interests of this class would be to perpetuate the capitalist system. While Socialism does not, and can not, represent the class interests of the capitalist, it nevertheless represents the higher and truer individual interests of every member of society, for Socialism would realize a nobler civilization. But the members of the proprietary class are
so blinded by prejudice and class interests that they are unable to see what would make for a higher social order and a nobler humanity. Thus while Socialism stands for the higher interests of all as human beings, as members of society, it does not represent the class interests of the capitalists, for their class interests signify such policies as make for the continuance of their class. Socialism would abolish the capitalist class and turn all mere owners into useful producers. But when we turn to the laborer we find that Socialism represents not only his personal interest but also his class interest, for the class interest of the laborer is in accord with social progress.

2. It Points Out the Necessity of Proletarian Class Consciousness.

Society to-day is divided into two classes—the propertied and non-propertied. Every man born into these class conditions inherits, or acquires, a classhood in addition to his manhood. True civilization can never be attained in a class-constituted society, for the members of neither class can reach their highest development in such conditions. The dominance of class interests prevents men from realizing the highest ideal. The Socialist recognizes the inevitable result of such conditions and so desires to abolish class distinctions and the class element in character, for he knows that human brotherhood must ever be Utopian in a system founded upon antagonistic interests.

While Socialists recognize the necessity of abolishing classes, they nevertheless constantly endeavor to awaken the working class to a sense of class-consciousness. This appears to many inconsistent. They say, "If you wish to abolish classes, why not begin by ignoring their existence?" We answer, Ignoring classes would not alter facts. Classes exist whether we recognize them or not; we may ignore them, but they will not ignore us. Capitalists ignore the
existence of classes in order that they may perpetuate them; Socialists recognize the existence of classes in order that they may abolish them. Classes will be abolished not by ignoring their existence, but by so changing our economic system that some will not be able to secure an advantage over others. To-day the possessing class, by its ownership of the means of production, is able to maintain its class character. To rid society of classes we must bring these instruments of production and distribution under collective control, for it is the private ownership of these instruments that divide society into two distinct classes. Socialize these instruments and the possessing or expropriating class will itself be expropriated, or, as Marx expresses it, expropriated of the power of expropriating, and all class distinctions will be abolished.

Now, the only class that has a direct and immediate interest in securing this end is the working class. The interests of this class are diametrically opposed to the interests of the capitalist class. As every class is moved by its material interests, it is necessary to awaken the working class to its interests; in other words, make it class conscious. This class consciousness carries with it a knowledge of the antagonism of class interests, and enables the laborers to see that their emancipation can only be achieved by abolishing the present system and establishing the Co-operative Commonwealth.

Class consciousness, then, means a consciousness of one's own interests as a member of a class, also a consciousness that his interests can best be subserved by advancing the interests of the class to which he belongs. When a laborer realizes these facts he is said to be class conscious. He then sees that his interests, and the interests of his class, are directly opposed to the interests of the capitalist class. He also apprehends the historical fact that the ruling class have always been, since the dawn of private property, the
class that owns the dominant factor of production. In feudal times it was the owner of land, to-day it is the owner of the machine. Every step in the development of capitalism meant added economic power for the capitalist class, and political supremacy finally resulted from this growth of economic power. While this is true of the capitalist class, the class conscious laborer realizes that for him political supremacy cannot thus be secured, for the reason that every step in the development of capitalism has meant his greater subjection. Yet with this loss of economic power, due to the development of modern industry, there has come the possibility of political supremacy through the growth of numbers. Upon the political field the working class can become supreme. It overwhelmingly outnumbers the capitalists and its power is sure to increase.

It must be evident to all that the control of the political power is necessary to any class which would permanently improve its economic condition. The first step, then, toward the worker's emancipation is to gain this control. It is thus that Socialists, the world over, emphasize the necessity of class conscious political action upon the part of the working class.

The laborers can here learn a lesson in tactics from the capitalists. The capitalist class is thoroughly class conscious. It perceives the course of action necessary to maintain its supremacy, and it can always be relied upon to subserve its own interests.

But the laborers, are, as a whole, un-class-conscious; that is, they act in direct opposition to their own interests. This they do simply because they fail to recognize the opposition of class interests, and do not see that their interests are antagonistic to those of the master class. They have been accustomed to take their economic and political ideas ready-made at the hands of their employers, and this class have seen to it that only such ideas were propagated
among the workers as would result in the supremacy of capitalist class rule. Of course, as long as the workers look to their masters for guidance, they will be led like sheep to the shambles. It is to the interest of the ruling class to maintain its position, but to do this the workers must be kept in ignorance of the true situation, for if they remain in slavery it can only be by their own consent. Were it not for this systematic perversion of the egoism of the subjugated class, so that they do not see what pertains to their real interests, the system could not be maintained.

The laborers are constantly deceived as to what constitutes their real interests. They are taught that the interests of laborers and capitalists are identical, that every man has an opportunity to become a capitalist and if he does not he alone is to blame, that the present system and laws are sacred and must be retained at all hazards, that workers should be meek and content with their lot and look to the future world for reward for present suffering, that the laborers are impotent to help themselves—all benefits must come from the class above, etc., etc. As the capitalist class control the means of information—the press, platform, and often the pulpit—it can bring these false conceptions to bear upon the working class and thus keep them in subjection.

The wage system in itself is admirably adapted to deceive the worker. He being paid in money, does not apprehend the manner in which he is wronged. He takes his wages, thinking it to represent the full value of his toil, when, in reality, it is far short of the value he has created. The wage system blinds him to the fact of exploitation. Of course, if he were conscious of the fact he could not help himself under the present system, for, the means of production being monopolized, he must submit to this injustice or starve. But one thing a knowledge of the evil would do, it would make him class conscious and cause him to take a
stand with the class to which he belongs, and unite his efforts with other class conscious laborers in abolishing the cause of all exploitation—the capitalist system.

3. It is Based Upon the Class Struggle.

Ever since the dawn of private property in the means of production, society has been made up of classes, known at different epochs under various titles—masters and slaves, feudal lords and vassals, capitalists and proletarians—and a struggle is everywhere manifest between these classes of diverse economic interests.

The class struggle is a corollary of the struggle for existence. As the Darwinian law explains organic evolution, so the Marxian law explains social evolution. The struggle between classes, re-enacts, on the human plane, the drama of the struggle between species. It is the last form of this struggle that we are interested in to-day. The proletariat, as we have seen, is in a condition of dependence. If it becomes emancipated it must become supreme, and its supremacy can only be accomplished by a struggle. This struggle for mastery is necessarily a class struggle, a struggle between the proprietary and non-proprietary classes. The subjection of the working class, being due to the fact that the instruments of production are the private property of another class, makes the interests of these two classes antagonistic and a class struggle inevitable. The fact of this class struggle need not be argued, it is evident, on every hand, by the class legislation, and the strikes, boycotts, and lock-outs which are a matter of daily occurrence.

The class struggle is the necessary outcome of class distinctions which involve class interests. The upholding of class interests naturally leads to class opposition and a class struggle.

We cannot expect those who are enjoying special privileges to willingly relinquish their advantages. It is but natural that they should strive to maintain a system thaten-
ables them to live in luxurious idleness off the labors of others. There is not an instance in history where a social class has, against its own real interests and out of altruistic motives, made any essential concessions. To suppose that through sympathy or altruism, or interest in the welfare of the whole, the capitalist class will freely divest itself of its class privileges, is to postulate greater wonders than are contained in the legends of the past. Individuals have done this, but not a whole class. This injustice will only down at the bidding of the working class. Thus a class struggle is inevitable between these two classes of opposite economic interests.

We must never lose sight of the class character of the movement. This does not mean, however, that members of other classes will not be welcome, but only that those who come should recognize the character of the movement and lend their efforts to furthering the cause, instead of, consciously or unconsciously, endeavoring to side-track the movement by efforts to introduce into its programme any middle class, reactionary measures. The Socialist movement being based upon the class struggle leaves room for no compromise.

Although the Socialist movement is based upon the class struggle, the triumph of the proletariat class means the abolition of all classes. The reason why previous revolutions resulted in the continuance of class dominance, is due to the failure to abolish class ownership in the instruments of production. But the proletariat supremacy will result in the abolition of all dependence, because the tools of production are now social and the working class cannot emancipate itself except by socializing these instruments. When these instruments are owned collectively the cause of dependence and servitude will be abolished. The abolition of private or corporate ownership, means the abolition of all class rule and all class distinctions.
The new order, then, is not merely an exchange of ruling classes, a society in which the relative positions of the two classes have been reversed, but rather a condition where classes themselves will become extinct; where the interests of one will become identical with the interests of all, and where the interests of all will be united in the social interests.

The class struggle will result in the supremacy of the working class, but when this class is exalted to power it will soon lose its present class characteristics. Out of the changed conditions a new type will arise differing from all preceding types, inasmuch as these are dominated by class conditions. Individual character is largely the child of social relations and conditions, consequently, the proletariat must necessarily bear the mark of its environment. The establishment of healthy social conditions will at once reveal itself in human conduct and character.

Thus while as militant our cause is identified with class, as triumphant it is identified with humanity. The class struggle, then, is but a means to an end—the abolition of social distinctions by abolishing class ownership of the means of production and distribution. Under Socialism all will be members of the one class—humanity, and the golden age so long dreamed will be a realization on earth.

4. *It is a Revolutionary Movement.*

It must be perfectly clear from the foregoing that the Socialist movement is not a reform but a revolution. A reform merely proposes a re-adjustment of the relations within the present class organized society. It does not involve a change of economic base, but merely a change of externals. Revolution, on the other hand, involves a change from within—a change in the internal mechanism of society without which there could be no progress.

As to whether a measure is socialistic or not, depends upon its internal mechanism—upon the standpoint from
which it proceeds. A measure may be apparently socialistic; that is, it may be so in outward form, while its internal working may be anti-socialistic and designed to serve the interests of some portion of the capitalist class. For example, both the reformer and Socialist want to socialize the railways, electric light plants, trolley systems, etc. The former desires to socialize them as a reform, while the latter proposes socialization as a revolution. In either case there would be a change in external form. The difference is, that the reformer would confine the change to externals, while the Socialists would cause a change in the internal mechanism. The reformer proceeds from the standpoint of middle class interests as against the interests of the plutocracy; the Socialist proceeds from the interests of the working class as against the interests of both the middle and upper class capitalists. The reformer, for instance, wishes only to abolish the railroad monopoly which is fleecing the middle class, the Socialist wishes to abolish all fleecers by abolishing the wage system. The reformers' scheme of socialization would not secure the workers emancipation—they would still be wage slaves and exploited by the capitalist government out of a portion of the wealth they produce. The scheme would undoubtedly reduce the cost of transportation, but there is no evidence that the middle class would reduce the price of their products to consumers. All they are interested in, is to transfer the large profits of the railroad magnates into their own pockets. The Socialist plan, on the other hand, proposes a change not only in the external form but in the internal mechanism. It proceeds from the proletarian point of view, and has for its object the abolition of all exploitation and the improvement in the condition of the railroad workers. To public ownership we would add democratic management.

Socialism, then, proposes a complete transformation of society—a change so radical as to constitute a Social Rev-
olution. The term revolution is used to describe the final goal to be attained, but not the method or tactics employed in its realization. While Socialism is revolutionary in its programme, it follows the laws of evolution in its method of attainment.

But here, note, that evolution does not always proceed with regularity. At first, during the germinating period, it proceeds slowly, but it gains in rapidity and finally the decisive step is often accomplished quickly and is termed revolution. Christianity in the Roman Empire, the Reformation, the French Revolution, the abolition of Chattel Slavery, are notable examples of the working of this principle. Revolution, then, is but a form of evolution, a decisive point, and is generally the last step in a period of slow growth and preparation, although there may be many such steps, revolutions and counter revolutions, before the ultimate end is attained. In the coming transformation the final step, whether peaceful or violent, which interchanges the relations between the ruling and subject class, will constitute the Social Revolution.

Thus we see there is no contradiction between evolution and revolution, whether we employ the terms to describe methods and ideals or the different phases in the progress of the movement itself. Of course, when we speak of the movement as revolutionary, we refer to the ultimate aim and purpose. A failure to understand how scientific Socialists use this term has led to much confusion.

We are surely nearing the consummation of the industrial evolution. But this does not mean that we have nothing to do, that we are to sit quietly down and patiently wait for the transition! It is our business to take such action as will facilitate, in every way possible, the realization of our ideal.

But what action will be effective? Here the reformer again comes into evidence and argues that as Socialism
cannot be completely realized at once, we should abandon, our advocacy of proletarian supremacy and the ultimate aim, and concentrate all our efforts upon reform measures. This method may sound reasonable, but the fact of class government renders it impracticable. The proposition completely overlooks the fact of class rule. It fails to see that in the present class organization of society, no measure can be introduced that touches the citadel of vested rights; that is, as long as the capitalist class is in complete control of political power. Capitalists frequently permit reforms that do not interfere with their privileges, but the moment some measure is proposed that threatens their interests the tables are turned. Can we expect it to be otherwise as long as the government is in the hands of a master class? For one to imagine that he can effectually curtail the power of the privileged class, so long as that class is in possession of the machinery of government, is the height of absurdity.

It is true Socialism will not spring at once full fledged into existence—Socialists have no magic wand which will effect the social transformation in a single day—but the first step toward that end is the overthrow of the present ruling class through the mastery of the public powers. When Socialists are in control of the government they will then proceed to put their ideals into practice. It will not all be accomplished at once, but as rapidly as possible industry after industry will be socialized, until all businesses are brought under collective control.

Of course, before Socialists have captured the national government they will gain control of municipalities and states, and as fast as they gain control they will carry out, as far as possible, the principles of Socialism. But, note, the first step is to gain control—is political supremacy.

This has already been accomplished in many European municipalities, and the benefits of a Socialist administra-
tion, within the limits prescribed by the state, are now being enjoyed. It is not, however, by reform, but by revolutionary methods, that results are being realized. We do not eschew taking a step at a time, then, provided the step is in the right direction and tends toward the realization of the final ideal. To the scientific Socialist there is no contradiction between the present day work and the revolutionary agitation. The immediate results which we seek to obtain are merely means for the realization of the ultimate aim. Thus, while not losing sight of the ultimate goal, we propose taking the road that leads to the Co-operative Commonwealth and capturing en route every outpost on the way. Labor conditions will improve just in proportion as the outposts are captured by the Socialist Party. Not only this, but any temporary relief that is granted by the capitalist class will be in proportion to the fear caused the class by revolutionary agitation. If labor laws are passed it is only to pacify the proletariat, but the capitalist class will only see the need of such pacification as the proletariat organize into a class-conscious party. Even then, upon the plea of getting something now, the surest way to secure it is to build up the Socialist vote. Revolutionary agitation and social reform go hand in hand.

How many times the laborers have been buncoed! Measures have been passed supposedly designed to benefit labor, but afterwards were frequently found to be inadequate or ineffective, and, if not, were declared unconstitutional by the capitalist courts. The only way to secure effective labor legislation is to have it backed by a class-conscious labor party. Just in proportion as the Socialist Party gains ascendancy it will secure this end, and will also extend the public service in the interest of the working class. This will not be state Socialism or state capitalism, but rather, what has been termed the infiltration of Socialism into the State. This would result in immediate benefit to the
working class. The public powers would then be an instrument in the hands of the organized proletariat to work for the betterment of social conditions. Even when we have gained complete control, the State will still be a class instrument during the period of transition from private to public ownership—an instrument of the proletariat class to effect its complete emancipation. It will be the business of the Socialist Party, when in control of the State, to carry out to completeness the legislative task of transformation. But, remember, all changes that tend to leave the present class government intact are mere reforms, and no change that threatens class rule can be introduced until the present class rule itself is subverted. This can only be accomplished by the triumph of the Socialist Party.

5. It Reveals the Origin of Surplus Value.

The discovery of the source of surplus value, which reveals the secret of capitalist exploitation, we owe to Karl Marx. By surplus value is meant the excess of value in labor's product over and above what the laborer receives in return for his labor. It is the surplus value of the product of labor over the value of the labor power expended.

Labor's exploitation is due to the fact that the laborer, owing to the monopoly of the means of production, is unable to employ himself, and consequently must sell his labor power to the owning class or starve. Labor power is thus an article of merchandise and the labor market becomes a branch of the general market of commodities. The cost of labor power is determined, like the cost of any other commodity, by its cost of production. As labor power is a capacity of the individual, its production presupposes his existence, and, consequently, the production of labor power consists in the production or maintenance of the laborer.

The owner of labor power, like the possessor of any
other commodity, sells its use value and receives in return its exchange value. The laborer cannot secure payment for the use value—the full productivity—of his labor power, for the means of production are owned by another class. The employer, then, can purchase labor power at its exchange value, which is determined, as we have seen, by the average cost of living. The capitalist having bought a day's labor power has use of it for the day, and all the wealth the laborer creates during this time goes to the capitalist. The capitalist returns to the laborer, in the form of wages, that which is necessary to maintain the laborer and enable him to keep up his labor power. Under present conditions this amounts to about one half the product produced. The value of labor power, then, and the value which labor power produces, are two entirely different quantities.

The peculiarity of the commodity labor power is that it imparts to the product a greater value than the cost—a value greater than the value of the labor power consumed. It is in view of this surplus that the capitalist engages in production. He buys and sells labor power, and makes the difference between its exchange value and its value in use—between what he pays for it and the value of the product it creates. He buys labor power for a certain amount of money and sells it for more money. The capitalist can make nothing in the buying and selling of the other factors of production,—raw materials, machinery, etc.,—their value is merely consumed in the process of manufacture and passes over and is embodied in the new product, but with no increase. It is only the living commodity, labor power, that transfers to the new product an additional value—a value in excess of its cost. This excess is called surplus value, because it is the value left after the value of the labor power consumed in the factors of production—machinery, raw and auxiliary materials, and the
living labor—has been deducted. This surplus is what accrues to the capitalist class in the form of profit, interest and rent. It represents the fleecings of labor.

The only way of abolishing this exploitation is to make the means of livelihood the common, inalienable property of all the people. When the laborers own collectively the means necessary to their existence they will receive the entire product of their toil. We demand the social ownership of that which is socially used. The private ownership of social tools means the private appropriation of the product of social labor.

6. It Recognizes the Fact of Economic Determinism.

Marx's discovery of the law that economic conditions constitute the determining cause of the moral, judicial and political phenomena is one of the most important discoveries of modern times. We have here the key to the explanation of human history, and of social and moral progress.

The Socialist philosophy points out that all social advances are secured through a struggle of classes. The economic conditions, the method of wealth production of each period, produces a dominant ruling class, and this class is able, through its mastery, to determine the social laws, rules and customs. At first the interests of this class are in accord with the advance of society, but the time comes when their interests, and consequently their customs and institutions, conflict with social progress. The economic development which produces this contrast also produces a class whose interests are contrary to the ruling class and more in accord with social development. A conflict is sure to ensue between these two classes, and the class more in accord with the changed conditions is bound to triumph. In this contest for mastery both classes are actuated by material interests.

As long as the interests of the ruling class are in accord with social advance, the prevailing economic system and its
ethical code are right, but when the interests of this class become opposed to social progress, then the system and its moral standard become wrong. The changed condition gives rise to a new ethical code, which, at first, is in accord with social progress and well-being. An economic system, then, and the moral code derived therefrom are right only as long as they make for the advance of society.

We see by this that there may be extant two codes of ethics at the same time—one representing the interests of the ruling class, the reflex of the established order, the other representing the interests of the new class, which the changed conditions have brought into being. This class naturally interprets right, justice and ethical precepts to uphold the system; in other words, to suit its economic interests. We may say, then, that the commonly accepted idea of morals and right conduct in any age is that which tends to the well-being of the dominant class. The ethics of each period are inspired by the interests of this class, and the subjected class is influenced in its action by an apparent egoism, that is artificially engendered in their minds through moral suasion and deception.

Every social system thus has its code of morals, which, in a class organized society, is composed of two parts: one for the masters and one for the slaves—different ideas of right and wrong always exist for the ruling and subservient classes. But the ethical systems are ever changing with the changing methods of production, which introduce new relations between men and thus give rise to new ideas of right, etc.

The validity of this philosophy becomes evident by an examination of the various stages of social evolution. In primitive times cannibalism reigned supreme. When one tribe conquered another they had no use for the captives but to roast and eat them. In this action they were following their instinct of self-interest—they knew of no more
profitable way of disposing of their prisoners of war. But in the course of time certain tribes advanced, or certain members thereof became more intelligent, and turned to the cultivation of the soil for subsistence. This class soon discovered that it was more profitable to keep their captives alive and compel them to work, than it was to put them to death. The social system having now become sufficiently developed to enable them to keep their prisoners under control, cannibalism soon disappeared and was supplanted by slavery. But it was not until man found that it paid better to make his captives slaves that he ceased to be a cannibal. This was a decided step in advance, both economically and morally, and those adopting the new method, though at first undoubtedly in the minority, secured an advantage which gave them power by which they completely overthrew the old order. From this higher material plane their moral vision enlarged, and they soon realized that it was immoral to kill and eat human beings. Here, note, it was not moral sentiment that caused the advance, but economic changes which made it to the material interests of some to preserve their captives alive. They followed this course because it was easy and advantageous. Thus cannibalism disappeared and the slave system became established.

This new system continued to exist until it became unprofitable to own human beings as chattels. This change is well illustrated in this country where history so rapidly repeats itself. When industry began to be revolutionized in the North, it was soon evident that to own the negro and care for him was too expensive. It was more profitable not to own the worker, as the ownership of the land and capital carried with it the virtual ownership of the men who must have access to these instruments or starve. So the North sold their slaves to the South and converted the propertyless workers into wage slaves. Chattel slavery, then, disap-
peared in the North just as soon as the introduction of ma-
chinery rendered the institution unprofitable, and it would
undoubtedly have disappeared in the South ere this had
not the struggle resulted in a war which summarily abol-
ished it. The changed economic conditions rendered chat-
tel slavery unprofitable—capitalism and the chattel system
are incompatible.

The rising capitalist class at the North thus disposed of
its slaves, not through sentiment or moral conviction, but
purely from self-interest. But this high material plane,
to which their economic development had raised them, clari-
fied their vision, and they saw that it was wrong to own
human beings as chattels. This moral conviction, however,
was not general until the institution became unprofitable.
The changed conditions gave rise to an ethical system in
which chattel slavery was wrong, but the institution was
only viewed as wrong by public opinion when modern in-
dustry found it more profitable to simply buy the labor
power of men rather than buy the men themselves.

The cause of the revolution, then, was the rise of a new
class whose interests were antagonistic to the old system,
and more in accord with the changed economic conditions
which demanded free labor. A struggle was sure to ensue
between these two classes, and the class more in accord
with social progress naturally survived. The transition has
differed somewhat in different countries. In France, for
instance, the struggle of the rising capitalist class was with
the landed nobility, who had previously supplanted the
slave owner. But this country passed from slavery to capi-
talism without going through what is usually known as the
feudal stage. The colonists were freed from the oppressive
restrictions on trade, which were feudal in character, by
the American Revolution. Capitalism, like all preceding
systems, was established by a class pursuing its material
interests along the lines wrought by the industrial evolution.

Capitalism to-day rules supreme. As the laws and ethical opinions are the reflex of the prevailing economic system, it follows that the reigning morality of to-day is capitalist morality; that is, the morality that sanctions private ownership of the means of living, and the use of these means to enslave the workers. Capitalist morality, as pointed out by Loria, is made up of a series of regulations imposed by the owning class upon the laboring class, in opposition to the latter's real interests, and upon the capitalists, sometimes in opposition to their immediate interests,—often masters need restraining from acts which would lead their slaves to rebel,—and it is these regulations that guarantee the perpetuity of capitalist society. Were it not for the systematic perversion of the egoism of the laboring class, by which they are unable to see the line of action that subserves their real egoism, the present system could not be maintained. The working class, being thus deceived as to their real interests, are led to support a system that holds them in servitude.

The economic evolution, however, is not yet completed; the conditions have materially changed since the supremacy of the capitalist class. At first the interests of this class were in accord with social progress, but that time has long since passed. The interests of society and the interests of the capitalist class are now antagonistic. Society wants a large product, but the capitalists want high values and values are opposed to abundance. Progress and well-being are thus blocked by this antagonism between social interests, and the interests of the capitalist class. The material interests of this class and the laws, customs and institutions which they have established, are now at variance with the changed methods of production. Production to-day, based upon mechanical invention and a far-reaching
division of labor, is essentially social production. This contradiction between the new form of production and the old form of appropriation is the cause of the whole social conflict. We have now reached a point where the private ownership of these tools blocks the way to further progress, consequently private ownership has now become a moral wrong. But this very economic development which has produced the contrast between the social and capitalist interests has also developed a class whose interests are more in accord with progress and well-being. This class is the proletariat—the class of wage and salary workers. An economic struggle is now on between these two classes, and the class more in accord with the changed conditions, and so in accord with the higher moral ideal, will triumph. This class is the proletariat. The interests of this rising class can only be subserved by overthrowing the ruling class, as every other class has done, and remodeling the institutions of society in accordance with its class interests. But the difference between the proletariat supremacy and that of the other classes is this: in the new regime, all society will become members of the one producing class, so that the new institutions will be advantageous to all. The triumph of the working class, as we have seen, will mean the abolition of all economic dependence, for their emancipation can only be wrought by socializing the instruments of production and distribution. By abolishing private ownership the cause of economic servitude will disappear.

The working class, then, have a mission to perform, and that mission is the abolition of wage slavery. It is perfectly natural that this class, like its predecessors, should follow its material interests and overthrow the ruling class, and establish a system in harmony with changed conditions and social progress. The self-interest of the working class will lead it to abolish capitalism and usher in the Co-opera-
tive Commonwealth, for their interests are in accord with social progress and the higher moral standard.

We see here how economic conditions determine the question of right. In the days of individual production private ownership of the tools was necessary to secure to the laborer his freedom and the full product of his toil. But when the method of production was revolutionized and the tools were transformed into social instruments, they were not capable of individual ownership on the part of the laborers. The principle of private ownership, which had hitherto been the means of securing to the laborer his full product, became now the means of his servitude and exploitation. The changed conditions rendered what was once right a decided wrong.

We need here to keep clear the fact that there exist to-day two codes of ethics—the capitalist and the proletariat or Socialist. The interests of the capitalist class are no longer in accord with social progress,—capitalism has performed its function in social advance,—consequently, the capitalist code of morality is wrong. The interests of the proletariat, on the other hand, are in accord with social progress, and therefore its ethical code is right—it is the standard of the new order of society toward which we are rapidly moving.

There have been men in each period who perceived the economic changes, and so gained a glimpse of the new order then forming, and from this vantage ground were able to see clearly the incompleteness of the prevailing ethical ideas. Those of the rising class who thus gained this clear vision were lifted to a new point of view. The realization of the new conditions and their class interests raised them to a higher plane and enabled them to see the injustice of the old system. To-day those who perceive from the new standpoint realize that private property in
the means of production is as wrong as private property in human beings.

And now here comes in the power of the moral idea to make for progress. Just as the old idea of right, itself the product of economic conditions, impels men to act in accord with those conditions, so the perception of the new conditions and relations gives rise to new ideas of right, which impel men to action—to labor in bringing in the new social order. It is difficult for a member of the ruling class to realize the imperfect moral standard of the present system. Here and there a capitalist may see the new moral ideal, but the great majority will have to wait until the new order is an accomplished fact before they will realize that a higher moral standard has been born. The Socialist, alone, from his standpoint, perceives the higher ideal and the ultimate morality of the final state of society.

Morality, then, has passed through a process of evolution—there has never existed a universal or permanent code of ethics. The system prevailing at any definite period was produced by the underlying economic conditions, and changed according as the conditions that produced it changed; in fact, the prevailing moral system, in common with all social institutions, has its foundation in the economic conditions and relations of men in society. Of course, we are not here considering the various ideal systems of ethics that have arisen in the minds of philosophers, but the codes that have actually existed in the different stages of social development. The moral forms are products of economic conditions. In each period the forms were considered perfect, but that which was considered moral in one period became immoral in the succeeding, because the old ideas of right, justice, etc., ceased to accord with the new conditions wrought by the industrial evolution.

We need here to note that the ethical beliefs of one system may survive for a long time (and perhaps indefinitely
unless they come in direct antagonism with new conditions) after the conditions that produced them have passed away. Not only is this true in regard to the coarser ideals, but also with those high ideals of right relations of man to man, which, undoubtedly, are survivals of that early communism wherein the interests of men were identical. Beyond doubt the lofty ethical sentiments which pervade the teachings of all the ancient moral and religious leaders of the world had their origin in the economic conditions and relations of primitive communism. Mr. Louis Morgan calculated, assuming 100,000 years to cover the life of the human race on this planet, that communism existed 95,000 out of the 100,000 years. Under this form of social organization man progressed from the lowest savagery to the very frontier of civilization. In those days the means of production were owned by the gens or tribe, and the distribution was in accordance with the needs of the members of the community. Although each of these groups in the earlier stages was at war with other groups, still, within the group, perfect harmony prevailed. Kinship was the basis of connection, and out of the common interests and mutual dependence the spirit of love, brotherhood and fraternity was born. Here was first realized, although within narrow limits, the sense of man's organic unity, of their solidarity, which afterward constituted the inner, underlying meaning of all the great faiths of the past, dominating the ancient Greeks, Romans and Hebrews, and also the Christians of early times. But in these times the sense of man's organic unity was confined within narrow limits—only in the new order will the ideal be fully realized. But we find in this primitive communism the origin of the law of love and service, which is the natural outcome of the identity of economic interests. These lofty sentiments and ideals still survive, although the economic conditions that produced them have long since disappeared. This system,
which bound up the interests of each with society as a whole, has left in the human mind an instinct for mutual helpfulness.

With the dawn of private property there arose a system of ethics more suitable to further the interests of individual owners. The higher ideals were rendered impracticable by the changed conditions, but the ideals have continued to exist through the various stages of social development. They are frequently referred to to-day as Utopian, as belonging only to the millennial period. These higher ideals appear so merely because they are inapplicable to the present system of industry—their economic base has been destroyed. Will the time ever come when the economic conditions will naturally accord with the highest ethical ideals? When the economic system will produce a code of perfect morality and compel men to recognize their organic unity? We believe that it will. We are nearing a point when, after our cycle of development under private property in the means of production,—a cycle undoubtedly necessary to social progress as a whole,—we shall complete our cycle, which, though seeming to return upon itself, always advances and ascends. The method of social evolution, to use the words of Goethe, is spiral, the concluding phase of the cycle being always higher than the starting point, and preserving all the vital conquests of the preceding period. Such is the law of all organic growths. As society began with social ownership it will again attain social ownership in its consummation, only on an infinitely higher plane. The method of production has already been socialized, and as a result a new code of ethics has arisen, which, upon examination, is found to contain all the highest ideals and sentiments that have existed through the ages. These ideals, however, will remain impracticable until the method of ownership is made to correspond with the method of operation. Social use of the means of production demands
social ownership. When the means of production are collectively owned, then will be re-established, only on a higher and broader scale, the common interests of men, and out of this identity of economic interests the higher ideals—love, brotherhood and fraternity—will again be realized.

The Socialist regime, with its public functions and social co-operation, will make all conscious of their organic unity. It will restore the conviction of solidarity by establishing a system wherein the interests of all are identical. Society will then be seen to be an organism which is pursuing a definite course of development with but one destiny in view. Although human solidarity is a fact to-day, all being partakers of a common origin, a common life, and a common destiny, still men are not conscious of it, or if they are it is not a moving factor in their life. Many hold the belief in man’s organic unity as a theory and preach the doctrine of human brotherhood, but it is not a vital, living truth with them. The reason they do not take their faith seriously is due to the present system of antagonistic interests. Under such conditions it is not strange that human solidarity, the brotherhood of man, even with those who have incorporated it into their creeds, is looked upon as an idle dream. This great truth can only become a vital faith in a system of social co-operation. The present class organization of society obscures the ideal. Economic solidarity is necessary to a realization of human solidarity. Men will never become conscious of the latter until they realize the former. When the means of production and distribution become the property of all the people, then the interests of all will be identical and the organic unity of men will become a recognized fact.

The realization of economic solidarity will give to life a new interpretation and realize the highest ethical ideals. The morality of individualism makes self the center, and is thus anti-Christian and anti-social. The morality of Social-
ism makes society the center. The realization of economic solidarity will make the interests of every man identical with the interests of every other man and with society as a whole, thus making the social welfare the ultimate good. The end of the individual, then, cannot be found in himself, but in society of which he is a part. As his interests are identical with the social interests, he can only seek and realize his own well-being through the collective well-being. In such an organization of society no one could serve his own interests without serving the interests of others, and, conversely, no one could injure others without injuring himself. The golden rule, "'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them,'” would then become a possible and natural way of living.

Egoism and altruism thus become in the new order practically identical. If I seek directly my own interests I minister to the well-being of others, and if I minister directly to their well-being I contribute to my own. Under such a system selfishness would be plucked up by the roots. Selfishness is only possible where one can gain at the expense of another. It is perfectly right for men to look out for their own interests; the trouble to-day is that they cannot perform this duty without injuring their fellows. Socialism will remove this difficulty by realizing the identity of human interests. Egoism, then, will be perfectly legitimate under the new regime; in fact, egoism and altruism will be the two sides of the moral shield. But this egoism will not be the gross egoism which results from the present system of industry. This higher egoism will care for the true self, but it will not make this the center, for it will realize that it can only care for its well-being by looking on the self as a means of forwarding the social well-being.

Under Socialism, then, morality will obtain its ultimate form. In an economic constitution which assures equality of opportunity, the personal interests of each would pre-
clude all injurious acts, for the interests of all would be the same. Under such an economy, the free exercise of each man's egoism tends not only to the well-being of the individual but also toward social well-being. The fact that man is guided by the instinct of self-preservation, or personal egoism, does not mean that he is either bad or good. This fundamental instinct, as pointed out by Loria, is in itself undetermined in its direction; it manifests, benevolently or malevolently, in accordance with the economic relations under which it operates. Whether it impels to justice or injustice, depends entirely upon circumstances. Under present economic conditions, where one man can seek his own advantage at the expense of another, this egoism urges toward injustice; but under Socialism, where one cannot thus gain at the expense of another, this very egoism will impel toward acts of justice. The same cause which to-day leads to wickedness will then lead to goodness, for egoism, in itself, is not responsible for good or evil, but rather the condition under which it operates.

Under Socialism the highest rule of human conduct, the ethical sanction, will consist in that which makes for social well-being.

Conclusion.

The foregoing constitutes the chief characteristics and doctrines of the modern Socialist movement. It is a movement, primarily, as we have seen, of the proletariat class to acquire possession of the means necessary to its livelihood. It appeals to the class interest of the proletariat, for its interests demand the abolition of the capitalist system. This class, as a class, is directly interested, or should be, in the establishment of the new order. But while the Socialist appeals particularly to the proletariat class, this does not mean that Socialism has nothing to offer the individual members of other classes, especially to those of the middle class. To be sure, Socialism does not subserve the
class interests of the middle class; nevertheless, it offers the only hope to the individual members of this class. Unfortunately, the great majority of this class do not realize the precariousness of their position, and so do not see the advantage that would accrue to each by transforming the means of production into collective property. Through the illusions begotten by what appears to them, at least, as a privileged situation, they are unable to rise above their class prejudice, and, consequently, fail to realize their truer interests, and so strive to perpetuate the very conditions that cause their ruin. If they were alive to the situation they would join the Socialist movement, for Socialism alone can give them security. The reorganization going on to-day means their downfall. Under Socialism, the readjustment would not be accomplished by their ruin, they would merely exchange their little proprietorship, hopeless struggle and deprivations for a copartnership in the whole productive capital of the nation, which would secure to each increased income, shorter hours of labor, freedom from worry and opportunity for development.

Socialism, then, while representing the class interests of the proletariat, represents the higher interests of all, for the emancipation of the proletariat would mean the emancipation of all and the establishment of a truer civilization. The possessing class, however, are so blinded by their class interests that they do not apprehend this fact. Of course, we expect nothing from the large exploiters, but many of the smaller owners, realizing their hopeless struggle, have seen the light and joined the forward movement. Socialism is being daily strengthened by such recruits.

The laborers, however, have no class interest to blind them—it is only by a failure to recognize their class interest that their servitude is made possible. But the laborers are becoming class conscious. All over the land, and, in fact, the whole civilized world, the working class is organizing
into class conscious bodies, having for their aim the mastery of the public powers, to the end that the present system may be supplanted by the Co-operative Commonwealth.

The laborers should demand their rights and enforce that demand by the Socialist ballot. Every vote cast for Socialism is a vote against wage slavery—it brings nearer the day of human emancipation. The paramount issue is Socialism vs. Capitalism, and this issue will remain paramount until capitalism is abolished.

Those who have seen the light should proclaim aloud the new gospel—they should carry to their co-workers the light of Socialist teachings. The movement is worthy our enthusiasm and zeal, for it presents to the world the only solution to the vexed problems that confront modern society. It is the evangel of human brotherhood. It maintains that every child born into this world should equally inherit with every other child the resources and opportunities for a full and free life. It wants every man, woman and child to be well housed, clothed, fed and educated. When industry is scientifically organized this can be accomplished in a few hours' daily labor, thus giving time and opportunity for mental and moral growth and development. Those who desire a realization of better conditions should join the Socialist party and aid in bringing in the higher order. Socialism will realize the golden age of peace, justice and plenty for all.

The progress of this great movement is phenomenal. It has spread with amazing rapidity until it has become international and cosmopolitan in character. The movement is co-extensive with capitalism, and is sweeping on to a worldwide victory. The sun of the Co-operative Commonwealth is already beginning to redden the eastern horizon, bringing promise of the gladsome day. Let us take new courage and press on—the future is ours.

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